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ABSTRACT

This discussion paper is from the Adult Learners Week National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Policy (Canberra, Australia, September 1999) that identified a number of ideas about how to foster national policy development on lifelong learning. It consists of three sections. Part 1 contains "A National Lifelong Learning Policy for Australia?" (Tony Brown), an introduction to lifelong learning policy with a list of questions to focus future discussion; two discussion starters, "Is Lifelong Learning Critical, Desirable, or Just a Good Idea?" (Philip C. Candy) and "A Vision for the Future of Australian Education and Training" (Moira Scollay), each with a list of questions to focus future discussions; and "Discussion and Recommendations of the Seminar Working Groups." Part 2 provides these examples of statements on lifelong learning from Australia and around the world: "Key Issues and Characteristics of Lifelong Learning" (National Board of Employment, Education, and Training, Australia); "Five Key Dimensions of Lifelong Learning in a Learning Society" (Peter Kearns); "Why We Need Lifelong Learning" (Australian National Training Authority [ANTA]); "The Attributes of a Lifelong Learning Policy Framework" (ANTA); "Lifelong Learning for All" (Donald J. Johnston); "Aims and Ambitions for Lifelong Learning" (G8 Summit Koln Charter, Germany); "The Learning Age: Towards a Europe of Knowledge" (Paul Belanger); "Learning to Succeed: A New Framework for Post-16 Learning" (United Kingdom policy document summary); "Lifelong Learning Summit" (Al Gore); and "Launch of Manpower 21 Plan" (Singapore government policy document). Part 3 has these appendixes: seminar program, seminar participants, and references. (Contains 31 references.) (YLB)

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Lifelong Learning

Making it work

An Adult Learning Australia discussion paper
edited and introduced by Tony Brown

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Contents

Introduction 4

Part One: The 1999 National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Policy

A national lifelong learning policy for Australia?
TONY BROWN, Adult Learning Australia 6

Is lifelong learning critical, desirable or just a good idea?
PHILLIP CANDY, University of Ballarat 9

A vision for the future of Australian education and training
MOIRA SCOLLAY, Australian National Training Authority 12

Discussion and recommendations of the Seminar Working Groups 13

Part Two: Background papers from around the world

Key issues and characteristics of lifelong learning
NBEET (National Board of Employment, Education and Training), Australia 16

Five key dimensions of lifelong learning in a learning society
PETER KEARNS, Australia 17

Why we need lifelong learning
ANTA (Australian National Training Authority), Australia 18

The attributes of a lifelong learning policy framework
ANTA (Australian National Training Authority), Australia 20

Lifelong learning for all
DONALD J. JOHNSTON, Secretary-General of the OECD 21

Aims and ambitions for lifelong learning
G8 SUMMIT Köln Charter 23

The learning age: Towards a Europe of knowledge
PAUL BELANGER, UNESCO Institute of Education 25

Learning to succeed: A new framework for post-16 learning
GOVERNMENT, United Kingdom 28

Lifelong learning summit
AL GORE, Vice-President, United States of America 32

Launch of Manpower 21 Plan
GOVERNMENT, Singapore 35

Part Three: Appendices

1. Program of the 1999 National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Policy 40

2. Attendance at the 1999 National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Policy 41

3. References 43

Introduction

This discussion paper came about from the Adult Learners Week National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Policy held in Canberra in September 1999.

The Seminar was attended by nearly fifty people. They came from government departments, industry, universities and lifelong learning centres, ITABs, a city council, the ABC, professional associations and trade unions. They included adult educators, independent researchers, policy workers, consultants, and industry representatives.

The Seminar was addressed by Moira Scollay, Phillip Candy, Mary Dickie, June Beck and Peter Kearns. Through the day the group divided into three working groups and discussed and worked on the ideas raised by the speakers. At the end of the day the groups came back together with a number of ideas about how to progress national policy development on lifelong learning.

One of the key recommendations was that this issue needed to be discussed among the wide variety of organisations involved in the practice of adult learning. This paper aims to fulfil that recommendation.

The discussion paper is made up of separate sections. You will find:

- my introduction to lifelong learning policy, and discussion starters by Professor Philip Candy and Ms Moira Scollay, each with a list of questions to focus future discussion;
- a summary of the Seminar participants' discussion and recommendations;
- examples of statements on Lifelong Learning from Australia and around the world; and
- appendices listing the Seminar program, Seminar participants, and references on lifelong learning.

Part One

The 1999 National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Policy

A national lifelong learning policy for Australia?

Tony Brown, Adult Learning Australia

The first Australian Adult Learners Week was held in 1995. One of the year's three themes was 'Lifelong learning for all'. In its fifth year, Adult Learners Week again had as one of its central themes 'Lifelong learning'.

The original UNESCO concept of lifelong education, as expressed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, was based in the humanistic tradition. That tradition saw increased education as a means of equalising individual earnings, linked education reform with social demands for greater opportunity, and emphasised personal fulfilment. Greater equity in educational opportunity was seen as a major levelling force in society. It was democratisation through education.

The current version of lifelong learning is different. The key 1990s reports on lifelong learning are influenced by a broader mix of economic, employment, social, cultural and educational objectives reflecting the uncertain and rapidly changing contemporary times. This breadth of objectives further highlights the interdependencies between the economic, technological, community, equity and organisational contexts. However the early reports concentrate their focus on the economic benefits of education reform.

Finding the right mix between education and these varying contexts is seen as centrally important at three levels. Education (and learning flexibility) is proclaimed as central for the individual, business and the nation – it unifies all three, so that:

- for the individual it increases income and employment security;
- for business it increases competitiveness in the international or global market; and
- for the nation it determines each country's position in global competition.

The First Global Conference on Lifelong Learning was held in Rome in late 1994 (see the report *World Initiative on Lifelong Learning*, 1995). In 1994 the European Commission produced a White Paper, *Growth, Economic Competitiveness and Employment*, proclaiming that, 'Education and training [are] the key means of ensuring the transformation of our society'.

Another white paper of the European Commission – *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society* (1996) – reiterates the idea that lifelong learning is inextricably linked to economic security. "The countries of Europe today have no other option. If they are to hold their own and continue to be a reference point in the world they have to build on the progress made along the road to European Union by more substantial investment in their knowledge base."

In a similar vein, the Education Ministers of the OECD member countries identified lifelong learning as "key to the continued development of OECD countries as they move towards the twenty first century". (OECD 1996: 13)

The OECD Ministers argued in their paper that three interrelated sets of issues had to be addressed to make lifelong learning a reality for all. The first is to improve the foundations for lifelong learning so that all learners, young and old, obtain the academic and vocational qualifications they need for work and further learning. The second is to facilitate pathways and progressions through lifelong learning and work, especially the transition from school to work. The third is to rethink the roles and responsibilities of all partners – including governments – in implementing and financing the organisation of lifelong learning for all. (14)

By 1996 the need for 'learning', according to UNESCO's *Learning: The Treasure Within* could be spelt out through the image of four pillars that support all human endeavours. The four pillars were: learning to know; to do; to be; and to live together.

The broader view of lifelong learning – incorporating economic as well as social, cultural considerations – has come to dominate education policy-making in the later 1990s, culminating in a series of declarations about the importance of education and lifelong learning such as those of UNESCO's international conference on adult education in Hamburg in

1997, and more recently, by the new Labour government in Britain. (Blunkett 1998)

In Australia the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) produced a series of reports on the need to encourage and support lifelong learning. Among these were *Developing Lifelong Learners through Undergraduate Education* (1994), *Lifelong Learning – Key Issues* (1996) and *Learning to Learn in the Vocational Education and Training Sector* (1996).

In its report *Lifelong Learning – Key Issues* the Board took a two pronged approach in reaching its conclusion that "there is a strong need for people to continue their learning - that, is to be lifelong learners". The 'dual imperative' was to build upon initial education and training to achieve broad economic goals and secondly to create a society where people enjoy learning in and of itself. The goal of lifelong learning should be to develop "not only a skilled and flexible workforce but also with enabling people to realise more of their individual potential and with 'public learning' – enhancing societal awareness and understanding of various critical issues in public policy." (NBEET 1996: 4)

The current Australian national strategy (ANTA 1998) identifies vocational education and training's mission as being to:

> ensure that the skills of the Australian labour force are sufficient to support internationally competitive commerce and industry and to provide individuals with opportunities to optimise their potential.

Reports from the United States have also, although to a much lesser extent, embraced the belief that education reform is necessary to ensure American industry's international competitiveness. *Workforce 2000*, a report by the US Department of Labor, is representative of the views not only of the Labor Department but also the US Department of Education, most of the national commissions on education reform and many business leaders.

> If the economy is to grow rapidly and American companies are to reassert their world leadership, the educational standards that have been established in the nation's schools must be raised dramatically. Put simply, students must go to school longer, study more, and pass more difficult tests covering more advanced subject matter. (Johnston & Packer, 1987)

Such views, also featured in President Clinton's 1992 and 1996 election campaigns, argue that if the American workforce is not as well educated as those of Japan or Germany, then their businesses will not be able to compete effectively in the world economy.

Vice-President Gore's address to a 1999 Lifelong Learning Summit provides an indication of official American thinking on lifelong learning.

The challenge: Linking learning & the implications

The challenge at the end of the twentieth century is to bring the work of the past twenty-five years within a policy framework.

In Europe this work has been underway for some years and has recently gathered new momentum in the UK. In 1996 Europe celebrated the Year of Lifelong Learning. In 1998 the British government released the report *The Learning Age*. A European Conference held in Manchester in 1998 was organised under the theme 'The Learning Age: Towards a Europe of Knowledge'.

Since then a succession of reports have focused on the policy implications of this work. In June 1999 the UK report *Learning to Succeed* identified a number of areas where additional work was needed. These included supporting young people, adult learners, improving quality, assisting learning businesses and developing Learning and Skills Councils.

In Australia renewed attention is being paid to researching Australian attitudes to education, study, training and learning with a view to marketing lifelong learning and skills acquisition.

The policy challenge, both here and overseas, is how to integrate the three overlapping sites of lifelong learning – learning in and for the workplace; learning in and through formal and informal education and training; and community-based learning. Integral to this challenge is developing financing mechanisms that will support such integration. What practical steps might be introduced that support the principles of lifelong learning – entitlements?, cross-sectoral partnerships?, informal learning opportunities and networks?

Various initiatives and schemes have already commenced. In the workplace, learning organisations are being promoted, as are workplace learning and assessment programs, while employee development schemes continue to grow. The first steps have been taken by regional communities to develop Learning

Cities. Learning Circles, on topics of civic importance such as reconciliation, democracy, salinity and crime prevention, are spreading across the community.

New technologies are opening up new learning opportunities for the geographically remote; for senior Australians; and for those unable to access courses at the times on offer.

Meeting the challenge

What follows are a set of papers that illustrate some of the issues raised in different countries and by different bodies. They are not meant to be comprehensive but rather to provide a snapshot of the discussion under way at the end of 1999.

They have been drawn from Australia; the OECD; The Manchester Learning Age Conference; three recent UK reports; and US Vice-President Gore's statement to the American Lifelong Learning Summit.

Issues for discussion

As Australians involved in the broad area of lifelong learning, we can ask ourselves what might we hope to achieve at a national policy level on lifelong learning?

1. What policy development would we like to see between now and Adult Learners Week 2000?
2. What is it reasonable to aim for ?
    - An Australian lifelong learning charter?
    - A statement from the 'social partners' – business, trade unions, educational bodies?
    - A strategic, or consultative, body to advise government on lifelong learning policy?
3. What steps can be taken to further progress developing a national policy on Lifelong Learning in Australia?
4. Do we need legislation for lifelong learning?
5. Do we need a lifelong learning policy framework at various levels?
6. What is the role of government in this process?
7. What are the roles of the education providers?
8. How can learning/education structures be organised under the overarching concept of lifelong learning?
9. How can we widen the scope of work-based learning and foster reflection in on-the-job training?
10. Is it possible to operate learning accounts for the whole population? For segments of the population?
11. How can we motivate a wider section of the population to participate in lifelong learning, and provide the support and opportunities to assist take-up?

Philip Candy and Moira Scollay raise additional questions in their papers, following.

Is lifelong learning critical, desirable or just a good idea?

Professor Philip C Candy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Scholarship), University of Ballarat

Introduction

I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak to you on the important subject of lifelong learning in Australia. As many of you will be aware, this has been a major preoccupation of mine for a number of years and it is a policy direction that I hold very dear. Although I suspect that my enthusiasm for lifelong learning is broadly shared by many of the people attending this symposium, there certainly is not unanimous support for the concept amongst our colleagues outside this gathering. As a result, it is likely that the rhetorical question in the topic I have been given – *critical, desirable or just a good idea?* – could be answered in the affirmative depending on the group to whom one is speaking. In other words, where many of us may regard lifelong learning as critical, there are others who think of it only as desirable, and others again who may simply endorse it as just a good idea but who believe that there are other more pressing good ideas that require their attention.

There seems little doubt that Australia lags behind many comparative countries in terms of its attention to lifelong learning, at least at the national policy level. A couple of years ago, I had the privilege of representing Australia at an international symposium convened by UNESCO and the Japan National Institute for Educational Research. The papers presented at that gathering emphasised the fact that Australia has been slow to embrace lifelong learning as a major policy goal at the national level. Unlike other comparative countries, we do not have a unified ministry of Lifelong Learning, nor do we have a policy context that supports lifelong learning; indeed, many major policy-makers and opinion leaders seem to regard the whole concept as something of an indulgence, and certainly as marginal to their major concerns.

Why has Australia been so slow to embrace the idea of lifelong learning? There seems to me to be a series of objections and concerns that need to be addressed. These objections can, perhaps, be considered under the following questions:

- Who is responsible for lifelong learning?
- Who is lifelong learning for?
- Why bother?
- Why is this critical?
- How much will it cost?

Who is responsible for lifelong learning?

Whenever Australians attend conferences abroad they often have difficulty conveying to their colleagues from other countries the unique challenges posed by our federal system of government. For people who are used either to a highly decentralised form of education and training or, at the opposite extreme, to a highly centralised national system, the division of responsibility between State and Federal jurisdictions can seem confusing and, indeed, counter-intuitive. However, compartmentalisation of responsibility is not just across government departments and instrumentalities. In Australia there is an additional fragmentation of responsibility when it is recognised that lifelong learning also touches on many stakeholders in the private and voluntary sector. The recent emphasis on information technology and advanced telecommunications (ITAT) has broadened the debate about lifelong learning to include issues of connectivity and infrastructure development that extend well beyond the traditional focus on issues such as learning environments, equity, pedagogy and community development.

Linked with this fragmentation of responsibility is an unfortunate tendency in Australia to engage in an adversarial style of politics and industrial relations. The progress that has been made in some other countries through partnerships between government, business, the unions and community groups would be difficult if not impossible to replicate in Australia, mainly because of our tradition of adopting a confrontational rather than collaborative stance and, in the case of government, frequently

overturning policy initiatives for no reason other than they represent the ideological perspective of a predecessor.

Who is lifelong learning for?

In discussions and debates about lifelong learning, there is an unfortunate tendency to confuse 'learning' with 'schooling,' with the result that advocates and apologists on both sides of the argument have a tendency to think that learning occurs best (or only) in the context of formal education. Even where this is not the case, we sometimes suffer from the peculiar debilitating tendency to wish to 'cut people down to size', the so-called 'tall poppy syndrome'. In this case, people who voluntarily seek to better themselves through education, training or self-directed learning are often undermined by colleagues, friends and family – the very people whose support and encouragement they most need.

Secondly, there is some evidence to suggest that continued learning is regarded as a gendered activity. In other words, it is imagined, whether it is real or not, that women predominate in formal education and training contexts both at work and in the community. Whether this is empirically true or not, it clearly represents a major challenge for organisations such as the Australian National Training Authority and adult community education providers to encourage people of both genders and all sorts of backgrounds to participate actively in lifelong learning.

A third potential problem for lifelong learning in our context is Australia's distinctive brand of anti-intellectualism; the assumption that we are a nation of non-learners. However, there is little evidence that this is true; indeed, it ignores both the reality that at the turn of the century Australia was one of the best educated nations in the world, and that even today we are amongst the most widely read and widely travelled people on the planet.

Why bother?

Under this heading, three different types of objections are sometimes raised. The first is captured by the phrase 'we have already done it'. Many commentators will point to evidence such as Australia's early adoption of lifelong learning principles as far back as the Kangan Report, the establishment and impact of the Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University, and the seemingly endless series of government reports that over the years have advocated (or at least used the language of) lifelong learning. While this is an impressive pedigree, it is likely that many of these reports and initiatives touched the lives of a relatively small proportion of the Australian population.

The second type of objection revolves around the claim that Australia's excellent information and telecommunications infrastructure, its world class university system and its high levels of participation in schooling and post-compulsory education are evidence that we are leading in terms of our commitment to lifelong learning. There are two errors of logic in this line of argument: the first is that simply having a good cultural and technological infrastructure is no guarantee that its benefits are widespread. The second is the issue already mentioned; namely, that of confusing formal education with lifelong learning.

The third and final type of criticism ironically reflects the reverse of the 'cultural cringe', namely, the exaggerated belief in our distinctiveness and the fact that we have no need to follow the example, or learn from the experience, of other countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, Canada and so on. For some people, the claim that Australia should become a 'clever country' is proof that we have already done so.

Why is this critical?

In times of rapid and pervasive change, and especially in a robust and diverse democracy such as Australia, there will always be arguments that particular policy initiatives should take precedence over others. In Australia, for instance, it has been argued that we need micro-economic reform, that the environment is a high priority, that we should concentrate on reconciliation with the indigenous population, that we need a national curriculum across our schools and so on. Whilst not denying the importance of these, or other worthwhile policy objectives, it should be recognised that a concentration on lifelong learning and, in particular, a 'whole of Government' approach to the subject would significantly help in achieving these other valued policy goals by laying a foundation of continuing learning and critical inquiry.

Linked to the competition amongst various policy objectives is the reality that 'the urgent

always drives out the important'. This dictum is true of business and it is equally true in the political arena, especially when governments feel obliged to produce quick and observable results. The consequence is that a focus on lifelong learning, which is inevitably a long term proposition with far reaching consequences for many aspects of Australian life, is often sacrificed to shorter-term and more expedient goals and initiatives.

How much will it cost?

A final category of objections to lifelong learning relate to the concern that such initiatives will be unaffordable. At the national level, there is a concern that broadening access will have undesirable economic consequences, because it will cost money. However, such an argument fails to take account of the costs of not broadening access; as the old saying goes: *if you think education is expensive, try ignorance!*

At the level of individual enterprises, there is widespread reluctance in Australian business circles to invest in learning for employees. Unfortunately, many Australian companies and enterprises equate money spent on staff development with a cost rather than an investment. To the extent that they adopt a short-term perspective, they fail to recognise that the long-term competitiveness of their enterprise, especially in a global marketplace, will be vitally dependent upon the extent to which their staff are committed lifelong learners.

A third problem for Australia is our taxation system which, in many cases, penalises employers and employees, especially when the learning undertaken is not of a specifically vocational type. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the government has introduced an initiative under the heading of 'Individual Learning Accounts' in an attempt to attract disillusioned and marginalised adults back into education and training. Very often, the route back into learning is through programs that do not in the first instance have any direct relevance to their employment. In Australia, such a scheme would target the funds expended, either as income or as subject to fringe benefits tax. Either way, this would militate against voluntary participation in 'return to learn' programs.

Conclusion

In concluding, I would like to pose three particular questions that may be considered by people attending this symposium:

1. How can we get Lifelong Learning into the public awareness and into the consciousness of senior policy-makers and other influential opinion leaders?
2. How can we get business and industry leaders to take the concept seriously, and to accept their role within the context of 'Lifelong Learning Partnerships'?
3. How can we help to develop a taxation regime that actively supports rather than militates against lifelong learning?

As I mentioned at the outset, my personal view is that lifelong learning is vital to Australia's international competitiveness, to our quality of life including our social inclusiveness, and to the employability and satisfaction of individuals. There are, however, a number of obstacles to the achievement of such a vision, and it is incumbent on those of us who believe in learning, not only to advocate for it in a variety of forums, but also to actively model our own commitment to such values.

A vision for the future of Australian education and training

Moira Scollay, Chief Executive Officer, Australian National Training Authority

We see a vision for the future of Australian education and training. Our vision sees:

- education and training as the cornerstone of an Australian democracy in which everyone has the opportunity to be active members of our society;
- the creation of Australia as a 'learning society' with a culture that deeply values skills, knowledge and lifelong learning;
- the new passion for learning contributing to national economic performance, sustainable growth and to our international competitiveness;
- intellectual and human capital acknowledged as the heartbeat of national, enterprise and individual wealth creation and prosperity in the 21st century;
- industry continuing to play a lead role in reform of education and training;
- all Australians sharing in the rewards of information and knowledge, with equality of access;
- individuals and enterprises as the customers of the system, with the individual learner occupying centre stage in the educational process; and
- a seamless post-compulsory education and training system where individuals can move through school, vocational education and training, adult education, university and other informal systems, in any order, and back again throughout life, with confidence that their skills and qualifications are recognised and portable.

Is lifelong learning critical, desirable or just a good idea? Lets start with the proposition that it's absolutely critical. Is that even worth debating!

There are three necessary and sufficient conditions for lifelong learning:

- a culture of learning;
- a culture of innovation; and
- universal access.

In our rapidly impending knowledge society, it is a choice between becoming life long learners and a learning society or missing out on controlling and creating our own future.

Is it worth debating – If so why?

Why not get on with the how? And in what form?

Some questions

How do we bring all our people with us? Will we need help from genetic engineering? Or quantum leaps in our understanding of how people learn?

What infrastructure is necessary to deliver lifelong learning for all? For Australians and globally?

What will the roles for government, industry, enterprises, individuals and communities be?

What should the balance of formal and informal education and training be? What should the balance of teacher soft and hard skills be? How important are formal qualifications and recognition?

Do we need to be concerned about a balance between education for work and education for life? Will one necessarily lead to the other?

What should the roles of the different sectors be? How do we retain diversity while integrating around the client?

How do we balance the needs of new entrants, existing workers upskilling, older workers deskilling and non-workers?

Discussion and recommendations of the Seminar Working Groups

Three working groups met throughout the Seminar taking up the challenges posed by the key speakers and finally came up with a series of recommendations. The general feeling at the end of the Seminar was one of enthusiasm and a keenness to take these issues back to their constituencies to further discuss and pursue policy development around lifelong learning. The efforts of the facilitators – Deirdre Baker, Angela Carbone and Tess Julian – are appreciated.

One group started by asking 'What are the problems confronting the promotion of lifelong learning?' In answering the question they noted some important contextual issues:

- People 'in the know' are jaded.
- People 'not in the know' are scared of 'it', unskilled at 'it' or unmotivated to pursue 'it'.
- The concept itself is intangible, and hard to measure and describe.
- It is perceived to be costly and hard to deliver.
- There is a perceived lack of political will.

Lifelong learning is critical but it is hard to articulate why it is so important. Also according to market research, Australians love learning. They just don't love the learning and training systems that have been established.

So how do we promote the concept so it connects with what people want to do and provides the required benefits to the society, that is, cultural, social, economical and industrial?

In response to these challenges, it was felt that policies and practices need to shift to a greater focus on:

- broadening the notion of learning from work and what we learn from work and what we need for work and for life;
- the quality of the learning experience;
- supporting community inspired learning ideas;
- creating a sense of belonging within learning;
- assessment and recognition for progression to further learning rather than an end in itself;
- the role and skills of the coach, the mentor, the learning facilitator;
- an infrastructure that supports people coming together and learning in an unselfconscious way, for example, networks;
- costing the benefits of learning in terms of the general well-being of the community; and
- inter-generational learning, that is, trying to duplicate the ways in which communities traditionally learn.

How to shift the focus? Some ideas about achieving a shift were as follows.

- Keep responsibility for schools with the States, but give responsibility for other aspects of lifelong learning to the Federal Government, and administer it through regional boards.
- Encourage a 'whole of government' approach to learning, as fundamental to effectively running all ministries :
  – adapting to a knowledge-based society and economy,
  – moving from a passive society to an active one,
  – establishing links with Asia, and
  – learning as central for integration;
- Set up a 'virtual ministry' across ministries.
- Review taxation to build in incentives for learning.
- Convene a national summit of learning: A Hearing on Learning. Lifelong learning is providing an answer to a question that is yet to be asked.
- Stress the importance of learning for community well-being across portfolios for example, healthy ageing... Recognise the value of older people as a resource.

- Provide support for learning other than just skills based learning.
- Use ITAB structure as a way of funding community-based learning initiatives and user choice programs.
- Set up centres, for example, learning trains and telecentres, for disseminating information through existing structures.
- Emphasise learning as fun, enjoyable, fulfilling.
- Encourage learning as a community problem-solving strategy, linking the community together and provide a mechanism for funding, for example, learning circles.
- Encourage enterprises to work within their community to encourage learning within and without the organisation.

Final recommendations:

1. We need a national policy framework. The nation is lacking a statement from the Prime Minister on lifelong learning. A declaration towards a national policy. This policy needs endorsement from State Premiers.
2. In developing such a policy, we need to build on the wealth of experience we have, be informed by the research from ANTA's National Marketing Strategy for lifelong learning and skills acquisition and highlight the successful models that have been developed.
3. The policy should include a declaration of lifelong learning, and an operational plan describing lifelong learning's benefits to the community. The operational plan should also include a summary of the successful national and international case studies of lifelong learning
4. The policy should be developed in partnership with Commonwealth and State governments, industry, trade unions, non-government organisations and perhaps a small task force
5. A whole of Government approach should build on the key public policy imperatives of the government such as:
   – emphasis to develop regional Australia,
   – development of a knowledge-based economy,
   – movement from passive to an active society, and
   – establishment of links with Asia.
6. It is imperative to look beyond the economic benefits of lifelong learning, to also emphasise that it fosters social cohesion and improves quality of life.
7. A discussion paper should be prepared summarising the Seminar's outcomes and be distributed to for comment.

Part Two

Background papers from around the world

Key issues and characteristics of lifelong learning

National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), Lifelong Learning – Key Issues, *1996, Australia*

Key issues

In 1996, the NBEET working party identified, in its interim advice, four key issues for further consideration:

- Assessment
- Delivery
- The social dimension of learning; and
- Access to lifelong learning opportunities

Characteristics of lifelong learners

Lifelong learners had acquired:

- the necessary skills and attitudes for learning, especially literacy and numeracy skills;
- the confidence to learn, including a sense of engagement with the education and training system; and
- willingness and motivation to learn.

If education and training programs are explicitly designed with the development or preservation of these characteristics in mind, then the number of people who slip through the system or become alienated from it will be reduced.

The idea of continuing knowledge acquisition and development of skills for the broad mass of people in society has gained a new impetus. Traditional training has limitations which can only be compensated for by learning over the life span of an individual.

Though there are distinct economic benefits to society from a population which is adequately prepared to meet a changing economic environment, learning throughout life has an important social aspect, given the increased longevity of the population of advanced industrial countries.

Lifelong learning should be concerned, not only with a skilled and flexible workforce but also with enabling people to realise more of their individual potential and with 'public learning' – enhancing societal awareness and understanding of various critical issues in public policy.

Five key dimensions of lifelong learning in a learning society

Peter Kearns, VET in the Learning Age: The Challenge of Lifelong Learning for All, *1999, Australia*

1. Foundations for all:
    - provision to ensure that everyone achieves the foundations of lifelong learning;
    - learning to learn skills;
    - motivation and desire for learning; and
    - personal mastery to drive lifelong personal development.
2. Strengthen and develop pathways, bridges and transitions:
    - strengthen and extend pathways through education and training into work;
    - support the key transitions individuals face; and
    - ensure support and safety net provision for disadvantaged groups and individuals.
3. Foster learning organisations and institutions:
    - encourage enterprises, institutions, and government agencies to develop as learning organisations;
    - integrate work and learning in enterprises; and
    - recognise informal learning in the workplace.
4. Extend the role of information and learning technologies:
    - ensure everyone achieves basic information literacy;
    - make modern learning technologies widely available through the community;
    - support and encourage individuals lacking confidence in the use of these technologies; and
    - use modern technologies to widen equitable access to education and training opportunities.
5. Develop learning communities
    - encourage and support communities at all levels to develop as learning communities: towns, cities, local communities, and common interest networks;
    - foster partnership and network development as a key component of learning communities; and
    - generally foster a learning culture to underpin economic activity and quality of life for all in a learning society.

Why we need lifelong learning

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), National Marketing Strategy for Skills Acquisition and Lifelong Learning, *1999*, *<http://www.anta.gov.au/lifelong>*

> Education is at the heart of both personal and community development; its mission is to enable us, without exception, to develop all our talents to the full…
>
> *UNESCO Task Force on Education for the Twenty-first Century – the Delors Report, 1996*

Learning has always been intrinsic to the life of individuals, communities and cultures. It is part of what makes us human and contributes significantly to our quality of life.

In Australia, we are rediscovering the power and importance of learning. In fact there is a growing national and international consensus that a love of learning by a country's people will be the key to prosperity in the new millennium.

Some key forces for change are putting lifelong learning onto the national and international stage.

Jobs are changing

Jobs are changing. Traditional jobs are disappearing or changing with the introduction of new technologies. Flatter business structures and an emphasis on teamwork and multi-skilling require the development of new skills and different knowledge. There are more and more jobs in the services sector. The Australian economy is increasingly knowledge based.

Today's and tomorrow's work involves new and different literacy skills, greater emphasis on communication skills, learning new processes and new ways of working together – much more than in the past. There is more than ever to know, and to interpret.

Work arrangements are changing. There is rising part time and casual employment, and greater use of outsourcing arrangements and labour hire firms. Self-employment is growing, and increasingly individuals are managing a 'portfolio' of jobs.

Changing work arrangements mean that many workers need to learn business, management and negotiation skills, and ways to develop their careers.

The electronic economy is expanding rapidly and no one knows what jobs will look like in the future.

Today's and tomorrow's workers must never stop learning: learning is not just for children and young adults: it is lifelong. Only lifelong learning can guarantee that individual Australians will be prepared for change.

Our enterprises need a competitive edge

Australian enterprises are competing in a global market, characterised by intense international competition and sophisticated consumer expectations. To prosper, Australian products and services must be outstanding by world standards.

Only lifelong learning can guarantee our standard of living. Australia's international competitiveness depends on a well-educated workforce.

A Growing Focus on Social Cohesion and Civil Society:

Education is a powerful tool for promoting social cohesion in a climate of social and economic change.

It also enhances the opportunity for all Australians, including the most advantaged, to fully participate in the economic, social and cultural life of the community.

The 1996 report of the UNESCO Task Force on Education for the Twenty-first Century (the Delors Report) notes growing inequality due to rising poverty and exclusion, not just between nations or regions in the world, but between social groups in both developed and developing countries. Learning can promote an environment of understanding, tolerance and compassion, and can help bring about greater equality.

The critical need to create a Lifelong learning ethic within the Australian community and

enterprises drives the development of the National Marketing Strategy for Skills and Lifelong Learning.

Lifelong learning – what is it?

The Delors report provides a useful way of thinking about lifelong learning. It calls for a broad concept of education which is pursued throughout life: flexible, diverse, and available at different times and in different places.

The report identified four 'pillars' of education for the future: learning to know; learning to do; learning to live together (and with others); and learning to be.

The four pillars of education

Learning to know

The mastery of learning tools rather than the acquisition of structured knowledge. Includes developing concentration, memory skills and the ability to think.

Learning to do

Education to equip people to do the types of work needed in the future. Includes innovation and adaptation of learning to future work environments

Learning to live together, and with others

Education to avoid conflict or peacefully resolve it, through education to discover other people and their cultures, and involvement in common projects.

Learning to be

Education that contributes to a person's complete development: mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality.

A literature review, canvassing the learning revolution and how individuals and communities learn, is currently being developed as part of the National Marketing Strategy for Lifelong Learning project.

Our record so far

Much is being done by the vocational education and training sector which contributes to a lifelong learning culture. Australian governments and industry are spending billions of dollars each year on vocational education and training. In addition, there is an enormous amount of formal and informal learning done by Australians. Almost 400 000 people work to provide education and training to some 1.46 million Australians, 95 per cent of whom are doing education and training for vocational reasons.

This effort has, in recent years:

- dramatically expanded the amount of training available to Australians
- been much more based on what industry requires of workers
- made education and training much more accessible to women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, remote and isolated people and other traditionally disadvantaged groups
- made trainers much more responsive to industry and people wanting to do training.

But much more needs to make Australia synonymous with lifelong learning.

The record of Australians doing school or training after their 16th birthday is not good. For example, as we get older, we do less education and training that leads to a qualification. 52 per cent of the Australian workforce does not have a post-school qualification. Australia ranks 15th out of the 22 OECD countries in terms of post-compulsory qualifications.

People without post-school qualifications are, on average:

- more likely to be unemployed
- less able to change jobs, or move up in a job
- more likely to be retrenched
- worse paid
- less likely to do more training.

Rapid and widespread social and economic change means that more people across the whole community must engage in more lifelong learning, at more stages of their life.

The National Marketing Strategy for Skills and Lifelong Learning will be the Vocational Education and Training's blueprint for turning the Australian community and enterprises on to lifelong learning.

The attributes of a lifelong learning policy framework

Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), National Marketing Strategy for Skills Acquisition and Lifelong Learning, *1999*, *<http://www.anta.gov.au/lifelong>*

- Shared vision about the value, impact and significance of lifelong learning
- Combining a national framework (consistency) with a strong focus on local level collaboration and networks (autonomy and flexibility)
- Funding that empowers learners
- A bias towards investing in the front-end of the learning process (that is schools and families and pre-school learning)
- A business and work culture that values and contributes to learning
- A willingness to undertake significant institutional reform
- Information and feedback on performance and progress

Lifelong learning for all

Donald J. Johnston Secretary-General of the OECD, October/November 1998, <http://www.oecd.org/publications/observer/214/editorial_eng.htm>

As we enter the era of the knowledge society, a recent survey of 12 OECD countries provides a sobering thought: at least a quarter of the adult population fails to reach the minimum literacy levels needed to cope adequately with the demands of everyday life and work, let alone structural economic and social change. Sobering indeed, and it is a finding which poses a formidable challenge to education, social, labour market and economic policies. In January 1996 the OECD education ministers agreed to develop strategies for 'lifelong learning for all'. The approach has been endorsed by ministers of labour, ministers of social affairs and the OECD Council at ministerial level. It is an approach whose importance may now be clearer than ever.

The economic rationale for lifelong learning comes from two principal sources. First, with the rise of the knowledge-based economy, the threshold of skills demanded by employers is being constantly raised. Certainly in respect of skills, the migration from the farm to the factory was easily accomplished compared with what is required for the transition to the knowledge economy. Obviously the rise in unemployment in many OECD countries since the mid-1970s and widening income gaps in others are a product of this knowledge and skill gap. Individuals with low skills have been and will continue to be penalised. Second, technological developments demand a continuous renewal and updating of skills, as career jobs with a single employer become rarer and as job descriptions evolve and diversify rapidly under shifting market conditions.

There are irresistible social arguments in favour of promoting education beyond traditional schooling and throughout adult life. The distribution of learning opportunities is already quite uneven and the polarisation between the knowledge 'haves' and 'have-nots' poses a new and pressing political challenge. Apart from unemployment and widening earning gaps there are other problems too; those in small and medium size firms find it harder to gain access to learning than employees of larger firms and in general women have poorer access than men. These discrepancies gnaw at the very fabric of democracy. Lifelong learning strategies can play an important role in breaking the cycle of disadvantage and marginalisation and so reinforce social cohesion. And lifelong learning can instil creativity, initiative and responsiveness in the individual, and therefore deliver better personal economic security.

Lifelong learning does not mean 'recurrent' training, but a constant relationship with education, starting with an emphasis on 'learning to learn'. And while formal education still represents the cornerstone of teaching, the less formal settings of the home, the workplace, the community and society are integral parts of the learning environment too, just as they are part of the foundations of economies and societies. Lifelong learning is already a reality in many OECD countries. The challenge is to find ways of extending it to all.

The importance of basic education cannot be emphasised enough. Lifelong learning policy must begin by strengthening the education of the young. Research suggests that children absorb much more in the first decade of life than thereafter. Early education brings long-term benefits, not only by reducing spending on adult remedial programmes later on, but by equipping people with learning tools that will serve them and their societies for the rest of their lives. Previous generations referred to the importance of the three 'Rs': reading, writing and arithmetic. They were right. These are the essential tools for lifelong learning. Preventing under-achievement and premature school leaving, and facilitating the transition from conventional education to working life are key to building lifelong learning policies. The linkages between different sectors of education and training have to be strengthened, and the pathways between learning and work made more flexible.

Education should not be thought of in isolation, and for policy to work all the stakeholders will have to come together to mobilise the necessary resources. There is a need to develop stronger, more coherent partnerships between a wide range of actors across society.

Of the historical constituents of economic growth – land, labour and capital – human capital has emerged as the most important. Resource-poor societies have developed it to engineer impressive comparative advantages. The foundation upon which human capital is built must be education, especially early childhood and primary education, where the role of the state is fundamental.

Aims and ambitions for lifelong learning

G8 Summit Koln Charter, 19 June 1999 <http://www.g8cologne.de>

The challenge every country faces is how to become a learning society and to ensure that its citizens are equipped with the knowledge, skills and qualifications they will need in the next century. Economies and societies are increasingly knowledge-based. Education and skills are indispensable to achieving economic success, civic responsibility and social cohesion.

The next century will be defined by flexibility and change; more than ever there will be a demand for mobility. Today, a passport and a ticket allow people to travel anywhere in the world. In the future, the passport to mobility will be education and lifelong learning. This passport to mobility must be offered to everyone.

Part 1: Basic principles

Meeting our social and economic goals will require a renewed commitment to investment in lifelong learning

- by Governments, investing to enhance education and training at all levels;
- by the private sector, training existing and future employees; and
- by individuals, developing their own abilities and careers.

The rewards for investing in people have never been greater and the need for it has never been more pressing. It is the key to employment, economic growth and the reduction of social and regional inequality. As we move into the next century, access to knowledge will be one of the most significant determinants of income and the quality of life. Globalisation means that developed and developing countries alike stand to gain from higher standards of skills and knowledge across the world.

A commitment to greater investment in people must be underpinned by three principles:

- first, that everyone should have access to learning and training, not just those who are intellectually gifted or economically privileged, and basic education should be free of charge. Special attention should be given to the needs of the disadvantaged and the importance of combating illiteracy;
- second, that everyone should be encouraged and enabled to continue learning throughout their lives, not just in the years of compulsory schooling;
- third, that developing countries should be helped to establish comprehensive, modern and efficient education systems.

Part 2: Essential elements

- The essential elements of a strategy for lifelong learning and training are:
- high-quality early years education;
- primary education that enables all children to achieve good competence in reading, writing, arithmetic, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and to develop basic social skills;
- secondary education that develops the aptitudes and abilities of all students, not only those bound for higher education and professional careers, provided by schools aware of the needs of labor markets;
- vocational training that imparts skills attuned to the needs of the labor market and the most up-to-date technology and which opens up pathways to higher qualifications;
- higher education that offers opportunities for everyone capable of profiting from degree-level work, with financial support as necessary to ensure access for everyone who can benefit;
- adult skill acquisition that enjoys appropriate public or employer support, accommodates family needs and affords ready opportunities for re-skilling throughout life. This should include high-quality work-based learning systems and equipping people with the skills needed for self-generated learning.

At all stages of learning emphasis should be given to the importance of creativity, entrepreneurship and education for democratic citizenship, including respect for the political, civil and human rights of all people, the value of tolerance and pluralism, and an understanding and respect for the diversity of different communities, views and traditions.

Part 3: Building blocks

Education systems have strong national characteristics and they have a very important role in fostering cultural diversity. But there are important areas where countries share common priorities and approaches or have identified particularly effective strategies for modernising their education and training systems to raise standards at all levels.

The following are key building blocks:

- teachers are the most vital resource in promoting modernisation and higher standards; their recruitment, training, deployment and appropriate incentives are critical to any successful education system;
- the mutually supportive roles of public and private finance and the need to raise the overall level of investment in education and training;
- modern and effective ICT networks to support traditional methods of teaching and learning and to increase the quantity and range of education and training, for example, through distance learning;
- the continued development and improvement of internationally recognised tests to benchmark student achievement;
- the recognition of professional qualifications and work experience;
- the promotion of the study of foreign languages to increase the understanding of different cultures and enhance mobility in a globalise world;
- increased attention to the establishment of clear targets in terms of higher standards and levels of achievement;
- the need to develop a culture of entrepreneurship in education, not least in developing the closest R&D links between universities and companies.

The Learning Age: towards a Europe of knowledge

Paul Belanger, 'The Context and the Challenge: Mobilising Civil Society', *keynote speech, UNESCO Institute of Education, Hamburg, May 1998*

Before dealing with the emerging active civil societies and the need for new policies I would like to talk to you about the changes in education in the post-industrial era. There has been a true transformation of the education we have seen in most of our countries, the post-industrial societies.

In industrial countries about a third or even, in Sweden, more than half of the adult population is involved every year in some form of adult learning or continuing education. If you add to these numbers the people who want to participate you can see the figures you are looking at: 52 per cent for Sweden; 44 per cent for the UK; 37 per cent for the Netherlands; a quarter of the population in Ireland. If you add to these figures the adults that said they want to take part in adult training but have not managed it because of a number of barriers you reach about two thirds of the European population. In other words, in post-industrial countries today the number of adults involved in organised training is well over the number of young people that you will find in primary and secondary schools. The educational scene in Europe is today made up of the active participation of the adult population.

The problem is that it is difficult to monitor the participation of the adults in education and there we have difficulties in determining what this education scene really is.

Funding

Studies show that the main financier of adult education seems to be the employer. The second source of financing is the individuals and then comes the state. Therefore it is possible to get some help with funding at local or national level; but aid coming from the companies is considered as the main financing source for men, whereas individual financing is considered as the main means of financing education for women. All this is linked to the actual state of society and the unevenness between men and women.

There are also differences between big companies and small and medium-sized enterprises, (SMEs). SMEs are the main creators of jobs in our societies. However, those companies participate less than big companies in the financing of adult learning. There is a growing gap between the people who have got the income to get education and those who have not. This contributes to widening the gap between those who are in and those who are out of the educational society and this is quite a challenge. But, and this is my second point, the uneven development of adult learning should not hide another phenomenon - the growth in demand for education among men and women in industrial countries.

If you look at the growth in demand, we are now reaching a historical moment. The potential of the players in the economy have a strategic importance these days. There are uncertainties at economic level, at social level and the cultural level. These represent all opportunities and this is why the civil society is becoming critical for the future economic, social democratic future of post-industrial societies. The autonomy of individuals is not only a name, it is a pre-condition in advanced society.

Post-industrial societies cannot meet the challenge, they now know, if there are not any new skills generated in all sectors of the population. I am talking about skills to manage uncertainty, skills to speak foreign languages, skills to face up to the multicultural nature of the society, skills to face up to any conflicts, so it is not only experts but the population in general that must show intelligence in post-industrial societies. The individual must understand technical information, must be able to use the expertise that exists through local communities, through local unions, through the local authorities etc.

To produce things today is to ask questions in order to improve. Production is not only formal production it is intelligent men and women that

have a potential and want to develop their creativity.

You can not face up to today's challenges without developing the skills and the active participation of the individuals, employees in companies but also citizens in society.

New policies

You will need new policies to face up to these challenges. You need to face up to criminality; you need new policies to reintegrate criminals. You cannot have solutions to environmental risks if the local communities are not stronger, if they are not part of the civil society and if they cannot act in that civil society. Racism cannot be dealt with by forbidding it either. You have to deal with it from the inside of civil societies, through education, through the action of those civil societies. We are talking about democratising democracy: that means the citizen must be stronger, there should be a new culture of citizenship. The right of the individual is not defined at the level of parliament but at each level of society.

The emergence of active civil societies means that the welfare state will change, we are not moving from a welfare state to a state that does not want to get involved anymore, or that just wants to be a minimalist state. What we want is a participatory welfare state and it is important that there should be a new contract between the state and the civil society. We are talking about the national state or the European union. It is important that there should be a social contract so that the active participation of the citizens is guaranteed. So what does that mean for the level of the new policies?

The new policies of education and adult learning are not first and foremost educational policies. If you want active policies for the labour market, active policies in the health field, active policies at the level of sustainable development, these new policies will have to be reflected in the new policies in education. Obviously you can have purely educational policies to take into account the education for adults. That's one point. But the policy for adult education tends to focus on the expression of a need at educational level and that is the main point and the Learning Age prospectus explains that clearly.

Looking at the needs of adults means that you have to support education for those adults. In the '70s we looked at continuing education. There was a great debate then, and we must not forget the conclusions of this great debate, now there are new factors. For example, in Tuscany we are talking about the 40 week working week where you will go to work for 35 hours and you go and train for 5 hours. There are other developments in the field of training that go beyond continuing education. This is an important point.

Role of the state

We must not forget either the role of the state in the provision of education and the main point is partnership. It is a new phenomenon. It has become obvious that the Ministries have to work in partnership and we are seeing this partnership idea developing, partnerships with the labour market, partnerships with the union movement. Trade unions in Europe have an extremely important role to play because the associative life can generate all sorts of training activities. In Europe millions of people get some training, get some education through trade unions. It is estimated that one citizen out of 7 in Europe takes part in education through trade unions, but it is also important to look at the new role of the state.

Adult learning and adult education is not the same thing as the initial education of young people. Ministries for Education, for Social Affairs, for Culture, for Labour are all important and you have to get all these players together so that you have a state, a government policy. This is quite a challenge. Lifelong learning crosses sectors and you can not export a model of initial learning into lifelong learning.

The state has also a corrective role, You cannot reverse the main trend that already exist if the state does not take some actions in association with its partners. The under- privileged populations in some countries participate much more than in other countries, which proves that if you change the policy you can get different results. But changing at state level does not only mean national states or local authorities it also means the European Union.

There are emerging active and educational societies in Europe but these educational societies could be lifelong learning societies that would mean that their population must repetitively have access to new knowledge, to new technologies, but it could also be a society that transmits knowledge on a continuous basis. The Europe of Knowledge is rather an ambiguous expression because an emerging

educational society can be a truly integrated active society that focuses on the player. Instead of the Europe of Knowledge, what I would have liked to see was Europe of Creative Active Citizens.

Democratisation of creativity is a name but also a necessity if 20th Century societies want to survive. The active civil society which is the core of lifelong learning is not a clientele that you will serve or that you will subject to your power. An active civil society is the gathering of active individuals that have and enormous creative potential. It is a society which has an active economy that can negotiate within its self more equal share of the wealth. An active civil society is also a society that acts, that thinks and that frees the potential of productive forces within itself, the core of a lifelong learning policy.

Paul Belanger was the Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education from 1989–1999. He is the author of many studies on adult education in Canada, in Africa and at the international level and was a guest of Adult Learners Week Australia 1995. In January 2000 he was elected President of the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE).

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Learning to succeed: A new framework for post-16 learning

Executive Summary, Government policy document, June 1999, United Kingdom

Our vision for the new millennium (Chapter 1)

Our vision is to build a new culture of learning that will underpin national competitiveness and personal prosperity, encourage creativity and innovation and help build a cohesive society. The principles which underpin our vision are those we first set out in our green paper *The Learning Age*. They were:

- investing in learning to benefit everyone;
- lifting barriers to learning;
- putting people first;
- sharing responsibility with employers, employees and the community;
- achieving world class standards and value for money; and
- working together as the key to success.

The National Learning Targets will underpin this commitment. To achieve them, we require significant improvements in participation and attainment beyond, as much as below age 16.

Why change is necessary (Chapter 2)

Whilst significant progress has already been made, we are still a long way from achieving our vision of a learning society. Too many people are excluded from the benefits that learning can bring. Aspirations and staying on rates remain too low. The system fails a significant section of the community, often the most vulnerable. People with low skills and poor qualifications are locked in a cycle of disadvantage. We must also make education and training more relevant and accessible to both individuals and employers. And people need better advice and support and more flexible ways of learning. There are also too many providers where quality is not up to scratch and where success rates are therefore very poor.

We have already begun to tackle these problems, but we cannot achieve our vision if we ignore the fundamental weaknesses in the current systems. Mechanisms for planning and funding are complex, inconsistent and confusing. Too many administrative layers means too little money reaches learners and employers. There is insufficient focus on skill needs and a lack of innovation. In addition, the inspection system does not deliver the consistent and co-ordinated approaches necessary to drive forward higher standards and clear accountability.

In drawing up proposals for change, we have been guided by the following principles:

- change should promote excellence and participation;
- employers should have a substantial stake in shaping post-16 education and training;
- systems must be learner driven and responsive to the needs of individuals, businesses and their communities;
- equal access to education, training and skills opportunities should be a priority, with equal opportunity in the mainstream of provision;
- people should have access to support in the form of good advice and guidance and, where appropriate, financial help; and
- accountability, efficiency and probity should be promoted at every level.

The Learning and Skills Council (Chapter 3)

We propose to establish a Learning and Skills Council for England to drive forward improvements in standards and bring greater coherence and responsiveness. The Council will deliver all post-16 education and training (excluding HE) and assume responsibility for:

- funding colleges from the Further Education Funding Council for England;
- advising the Government on the National Learning Targets from the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT);
- funding Modern Apprenticeships, National Traineeships and other government funded training and workforce development from Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) developing, in partnership with local education authorities (LEAs), arrangements for adult and community learning;
- providing information, advice and guidance to adults; and
- working with the pre-16 education sector to ensure coherence across all 14–19 education.

We propose to establish the new Learning and Skills Council from April 2001. Key features will be:

- a system driven by the needs of the learner including the significant involvement of employers;
- the majority of the Council's members will be users of learning (employers, individuals, local authorities and community representatives); and
- the Council will be advised by two Committees of the Council: one with direct responsibility for young people; the other with responsibility for adult learners.

The Committees will advise the Council and assess the needs of their respective groups in the context of present and future labour market skills, and advise on action and strategies; the Council will work through a network of up to 50 local Learning and Skills Councils, which will plan and co-ordinate provision locally and establish clear lines of accountability to the communities they serve. These local Learning and Skills Councils will be arms of the national Council but with sufficient local flexibility and autonomy to allow them to match provision to local needs and meet skill shortages. Their work will be overseen by Boards who – as with the national Council – will have a majority of members who can represent users of learning locally; local Learning Partnerships will be at the heart of these new arrangements. This will ensure that the system is fully responsive to local partners and community needs. We propose a new role for them in drawing up arrangements for consultative mechanisms through which the voice of individual learners can be heard and fed back to improve the quality of provision; and improved accountability, efficiency and probity.

The Learning and Skills Council will promote equality of opportunity in all it does.

A framework for success beyond 16 (Chapter 4)

We propose to build a new system of planning and funding post-16 education and training that will overcome the complexity of the existing system and cut unnecessary layers of bureaucracy. The new system will simplify arrangements and make it easier for money to get to the learner. It will promote flexibility and customer focused learning, drawing on the experience of the University for Industry (UfI). It will also support equality of opportunity and meet the needs of people who face particular disadvantages in the labour market.

Within these arrangements, it will be essential that the local Learning and Skills Councils have local flexibility and autonomy in significant areas of their work. By agreement with the national Council, they will have the scope to vary the national funding tariff, for example, in relation to particular local needs and skill shortages. They will also manage local budgets for quality improvement, building capacity in providers, adult and community learning, education business partnerships, Investors in People and other areas where local flexibility is important.

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) will have a key role in the planning arrangements for learning and skills, with a strong link between the RDAs and the Learning and Skills Council both at national and local level. Local Councils' plans will reflect the needs and priorities of the region set out in the RDAs' regional strategy; and RDAs will work with local Councils to assess how well regional skills needs are met.

We will be consulting on the new planning and funding system and the ways in which we can strike the right balance between national arrangements and local flexibility.

We will also establish systems to evaluate the success of the new arrangements. An essential part of the evaluation will be ensuring good quality information about outcomes and their impact at national and local level.

Improving quality (Chapter 5)

We expect the Learning and Skills Council only to fund learning which meets its quality standards and probity requirements and to take firm action where providers are falling short of these standards. The Learning and Skills Council will be responsible for drawing up a quality improvement strategy. The Council will also reward high quality in education and training provision building on the accredited and Beacon status introduced for FE colleges.

These quality standards need to be supported by new rigorous, independent inspection arrangements. To improve coherence, we will bring together the inspection processes for young people learning in schools and colleges through to the age of 19. OFSTED will be responsible for the inspection of this provision. We want in addition to combine current arrangements to create a new independent Inspectorate which will assess the quality of provision for adults and of all work based training. The new Inspectorate will work closely with OFSTED to ensure a common approach to inspection.

Education and training of young people (Chapter 6)

Young people deserve the chance to be better qualified and to have the best possible start to their working lives. We propose to publish shortly a strategy – called Connexions – for making sure that far more young people continue in education and training through their teenage years until they are at least 19. Ensuring young people have the help, support and guidance that will raise their aspirations and tackle problems which stand in the way will be essential. We are introducing -progressively from September – a Learning Gateway for 16 and 17 year olds who need extra guidance and support to benefit from mainstream learning. Central to this will be the development of a network of personal advisers.

We propose to create new arrangements for providing support to young people, based on this concept of personal advisers. Its prime function will be to create a comprehensive structure for advice and support for all young people from the age of 13, improving the coherence of what is currently provided through organisations such as the Careers Service, parts of the Youth Service and a range of other specialist agencies. The new service will present a step change in the way this support is provided to young people, ensuring a smooth transition from compulsory schooling to post-16 learning. The new service will need an innovative, effective and consistent means of local delivery, building on best current practice. It will be organised on the same geographical areas as the local Learning and Skills Councils.

Supporting adult learners (Chapter 7)

The Learning and Skills Council will work with others to champion lifelong learning for all. The Council will have a clear role to play in driving up demand for learning so as to complement the impact of individual learning accounts and the UfI and support the work of NIACE, the Campaign for Learning and broadcasters in promoting learning throughout life. The Learning and Skills Council will work closely with the UfI to improve the overall coherence and responsiveness of education and training provision for adults and embed lifelong learning in people's daily lives. It will have a responsibility for funding high quality information, advice and guidance for adults, working closely with the UfI's Learning Direct national helpline and a national duty to secure adult and community learning provision, to which local authorities will have the duty to contribute.

We also propose a more integrated service for unemployed people, by transferring responsibility for work based learning for adults from TECs to the Employment Service from April 2001, so that it becomes part of a coherent set of programmes, alongside the New Deals and the new ONE service for benefit claimants.

Encouraging learning businesses (Chapter 8)

Businesses need a well-motivated and skilled workforce to compete in global markets. Successful employers are those who realise that people are their most important asset – and act on that by investing in their skills and development. The proposals for a Learning and Skills Council at national and local level will give employers unprecedented influence over the education system and promote a better match between demand and supply for skills.

At national level the Learning and Skills Council will build better sources of labour market and skills information, drawing in up to date information on sectoral trends from the National Training Organisations, as a basis for the preparation and publication of a strategy for skills and workforce development and an annual skills assessment for the nation. They will develop new initiatives to improve the opportunities that individuals in the workplace have to acquire skills, drawing on the experience of UfI and trade union initiatives such as Bargaining for Skills. The network of local councils will identify and disseminate best practice in work based training, drawing on initiatives such as the People Skills Scoreboard.

At local level, Learning and Skills Councils will provide a wide range of practical help to individual businesses, for example support in developing effective training plans, advice and support for Investors in People, support for critical skills development and help with recruitment for Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships. They will also develop new approaches to collaborative working between employers, for example setting up networks of employers in a particular sector to identify key skill needs for the sector and work with colleges and providers to establish effective supply chain responses and 'preferred supplier arrangements'. Local Learning and Skills Councils will also encourage businesses to set up 'employee development' schemes, linking them to individual learning accounts to stimulate demand for learning from individuals.

Local Learning and Skills Councils' plans will be developed in conjunction with the new Small Business Service, for example by arranging for the Small Business Service to provide a seamless service to small and medium-sized businesses and to integrate skills development with enterprise and business competitiveness.

Lifelong Learning Summit

Al Gore, Vice-President, United States of America, 12 January 1999,
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OVP/speeches/lifelong.html>

I want to thank all of you for joining us today for this important summit – at over 1000 satellite sites, in every state in America. We're here to talk about one of our greatest challenges: how do we give every American the chance to learn 21st Century skills, so they can fill high-paying 21st Century jobs?

This is a time of great prosperity for America. Just four days ago, President Clinton marked what is now the longest peacetime economic expansion in the history of the United States.

Today's economy is also a changing economy. We are now in the early stages of an information revolution – not just in our high-tech industries, but in our core industries and manufacturing as well. Some of you may be familiar with a new fact of life known as Moore's Law, which explains that we are now doubling our computing power every 18 months, while the cost of computing power drops by almost 25 per cent a year. Just think about the new productivity that is being unleashed – at large and small businesses alike. Consider this one example: a Ford Taurus now has more computing power than the Apollo 11 that took us to the moon.

At the same time, car manufacturers have trimmed about 1,000 pounds from the weight of an average car by using lighter materials, smarter engineering, and more efficient engines. Throughout our economy, skills, intelligence, and creativity are replacing mass and money – which is why, in the past 50 years, the value of our economy has tripled, while the physical weight of our economy as a whole has barely increased at all.

Clearly, today's workplace is becoming more high-tech, and more high-skilled. It is becoming more competitive, as we sell our products to billions of global consumers. And as CWA President Morty Bahr puts it: "Skill is the new source of security in the 21st Century."

With all that change comes a significant challenge: how do we make sure everyone has the chance to compete and win in this new knowledge-based economy?

A central answer must be a good education, and the ability to keep learning for a lifetime. Education can no longer stop after you leave high school, or even college.

Right now, our skill needs and our workplaces are changing quickly – yet 75 per cent of the people who will be working in the year 2010 are already in the workforce. That's one reason why the average age of students at community colleges is now 29 and rising.

The comedian Dana Carvey once put it this way: "I'm only 30 years old, but I read at the 34-year-old level." In the 21st Century, we must make sure that everyone – even those 30-year-olds, 40-year-olds, 50-year-olds and beyond – can get the education and skills to rise with the tide of our new and renewed economy.

Many of our most crucial industries are facing shortages of the skilled workers they need. In manufacturing, 88 per cent of companies are having trouble finding qualified applicants for at least one job function. One in five say they can't expand their businesses because their workers don't have the right skills. Think about that: the lack of skills and training is actually slowing down our economy!

Here are some compelling facts from a new report I am releasing today from our Departments of Education, Commerce, and Labor; our Small Business Administration, and the National Institute for Literacy:

- In 1997, college graduates earned 77 per cent more than high school graduates – up from 58 per cent in 1975.
- Adults with higher levels of education earn more, have greater job security, are less likely to be unemployed, and are more likely to find reemployment quickly if they are displaced.

- In fact, dislocated workers with an associate's degree or higher are finding new jobs that pay more than the jobs they lost!

And higher skills is one of the best investments a company can make. According to our new report, a 10 per cent increase in education investments leads to an average productivity gain of 8.6 per cent – nearly three times the return on capital investments.

No wonder Jerry Jasinowski of the National Association of Manufacturers told me earlier today that there is no higher priority than lifelong learning – that it is a way to increase productivity and workers' earnings at the same time.

Yet too many of our people are not getting the education and training they need –especially those that need it the most. As Mayor Clarence Anthony of South Bay, Florida, reminded me at our roundtable this morning, for all our economic strength, too many are still being left behind. There are other challenges: some employers may worry that those who receive training will take their new skills elsewhere, or have very limited resources. Some individuals face serious barriers: lack of money, time, and information. In today's breakout session on the role of community colleges, you spoke about the special challenges of part-time learners – those who have to keep working while they expand their skills.

We must overcome all these barriers together. For we are at the next great economic frontier. Once, land and capital were the key strategic resources. Now, knowledge is our key strategic resource and learning is our key strategic skill.

In the past six years, with President Clinton's leadership, we have opened the doors to higher education wider than ever before – simplifying our nation's job training system, helping to make at least two years of college universally available, and passing a tax credit of up to 20 per cent off tuition for courses throughout one's lifetime. Now we must take the next bold step: we must find a way to make sure every American has access to the resources they need to keep learning for a lifetime. Buying lifelong learning should be as affordable and routine as buying a new appliance or financing a car.

That is why I am pleased to announce today that President Clinton and I will create a new advisory committee of outside leaders to explore ways to meet this challenge – such as low-income loans, grants, tax incentives, and other ways to help adults get 21st Century skills for 21st Century jobs. In particular, we should explore ways to help Americans pool their own savings, contributions from their employers, and possibly also federal funds to pay for lifelong learning. We should consider creating lifelong learning savings accounts, to help people pay for the higher education they need to get ahead.

At the same time, we need to make high-quality education and training more widely available – in the community and on-line. And we must ensure that all of our people have good, up-to-the-minute information and counselling on available jobs, the training needed to get those jobs, and the where to get the resources to pay for it.

Today, I'm pleased to make some brand new announcements that will move us closer to our shared goals. First, I am calling on employers to provide more worker scholarships for the 21st Century, and I am proposing an expanded version of our current tax break to help them do so. This proposal will assure that employees can receive educational benefits from their employers tax-free – for undergraduate or graduate courses.

Next, I am unveiling a new, $60 million plan to help train our workers for high-skill jobs in industries that face serious skill shortages. This new initiative will provide grants to regional partnerships of employers, colleges, unions, our new workforce investment boards, and others – to help them identify skill shortages in their communities, and then connect workers to the training and jobs they need. As you concluded at today's sessions on high growth and on the needs of small businesses, regional skills alliances are the best way to meet our most vital skill needs – industry by industry, community by community.

We must also help the 44 million American adults who struggle with a job application, can't read to their kids, or are stuck on the welfare rolls because they lack basic skills. As you discussed in today's breakout session on basic skills, education and training can play a powerful role in moving people from welfare to work.

I also know that in this morning's breakout session on workplace education, you focussed on the need to make it easier for employers to provide workplace education through targeted tax breaks. We hear that message loud and clear. That's why President Clinton and I are proposing a new ten per cent tax credit for

employers who provide literacy, English as a second language, and basic education programs. These new tax breaks will help all American get the skills they need for the jobs they deserve.

I am also creating a new 21st Century High-Skills Community Award. Just as the Baldridge Award recognises companies with world-class growth strategies, this award will celebrate communities that build our economy by investing in our people.

To help every American understand the training they need and the training that is available, our Labor Department is creating a new on-line American Learning Exchange – a website that tells people about the training and education opportunities in their community, and tells providers about potential enrolees. This website will also offer on-line financial counselling – telling workers the kinds of resources available to them, and also the likely amounts they can apply for and receive.

Finally, in today's breakout session on labor-management partnerships, you spoke of the need for the federal government to highlight best practices, and you talked about new ways that labor and management can work more closely together to expand lifetime learning. We want to encourage exciting new partnerships across all sectors. That is why we are creating a new leadership group of top business executives, labor leaders, educators, and community leaders to find new ways, beyond the steps government can take, to dramatically expand lifelong learning. I look forward to your ideas, your energy, and your recommendations.

Let us realise that the if we truly want to meet this challenge – if we want to give every American the chance to reach their highest potential, and soar as high as their dreams can carry them – then we must do it together. It will take the best thinking of business, labor, educators, and community groups across the country. That is what I hope this Summit will unleash – and it is why I am so eager to hear from you...

Launch of Manpower 21 Plan

Government policy document, 13 August 1999, Singapore, <http://www.gov.sg/mom/news/news99/990831.html>

In its 1999 ranking, US-based *Business Environment Risk Intelligence* (BERI) has rated Singapore's workers best in the world first for relative productivity. The 1999 *World Competitiveness Yearbook* placed Singapore's workforce competitiveness on par with developed countries. Singapore also has a relatively skilled workforce, sound industrial relations climate and excellent training infrastructure. Singapore's current workforce provides a good foundation for Singapore's transition to a knowledge-based economy.

Transiting into a knowledge-based economy

To meet these challenges and succeed as a knowledge economy, Singapore must maximise its own talent pool and ensure its indigenous workforce has the right skills, know-how and mindsets to create new products, markets and wealth for Singapore.

A new manpower paradigm

In response to the workforce challenges of the new millennium, the Manpower 21 Plan is launched to develop Singapore's manpower as a key competitive advantage in the new global economy. The Manpower 21 Plan is effectively the manpower response to the Committee on Singapore's Competitiveness' vision of Singapore as a globally competitive knowledge economy. M21 is also about creating opportunities for Singaporeans to realise their full potential so that everyone can make a meaningful contribution.

The Manpower 21 vision is for Singapore to become a Talent Capital, a centre of ideas, innovation, knowledge and exchange. It is a hub of continuous learning for lifelong employability and a country where the Government, employers, unions, community organisations work in unison to achieve the country's goals. In essence, it is a place where people make the difference.

The Manpower 21 Plan adopts a holistic approach, covering the full manpower spectrum. Six core strategies were formulated to address all aspects of the manpower value chain, including manpower planning, lifelong learning, talent augmentation, manpower development, workplace transformation and partnership.

These strategies and recommendations are the result of a collaborative and consultative process harnessing the collective energies of the Ministry of Manpower's (MOM) partners, which include the unions, industry, grassroots, people and public sectors.

Strategy 1: Integrated manpower planning

The key recommendations are:

(i) Enhanced Manpower Information System

An enhanced *Manpower Information System* will be developed to provide relevant and timely manpower information to policy makers, employers, training providers and individuals.

(ii) National Manpower Council

A *National Manpower Council* will also be established to set strategic directions and oversee Singapore's national manpower planning, development and augmentation strategies and targets.

Strategy 2: Lifelong learning for lifelong employability

The key recommendations are:

(i) School of Lifelong Learning

The School of Lifelong Learning is a comprehensive system that addresses the needs of all workforce levels. Currently, pre-employment qualifications are used to recognise skills competencies. This is not ideal, given that the broad curricula of Singapore's pre-employment system has limited use for adults in the workforce – people who have already gained work experience but require upgrading in specific skills.

(ii) National Skills Recognition System

To address this issue, a *National Skills Recognition System (NSRS)* will be established to develop definitive workplace skills standards and accord recognition to training that meet these standards. To help individuals overcome time constraints in learning, the system will be designed to encourage bite-size modular learning that can be offered part-time or even on-the-job. It is also planned that a National Skills Council comprising industry players, learning providers, unions and the government will be formed to direct the development of the NSRS.

(iii) Incentives

The Manpower 21 blueprint also looks at providing employer- and individual-based incentives to stimulate lifelong learning amongst Singaporeans.

To encourage more employer-based training, the Government will review the Skills Development Fund (SDF) levy.

To encourage Singaporeans to assume personal responsibility for lifelong learning, MOM will work with the Ministry of Finance to broaden the existing criteria for courses eligible for income tax relief. These courses may include those not directly related to an individual's existing business, profession or employment, but which serve to enhance his/her employability.

(iv) One-stop career centres

The changing workplace has also brought with it a new set of information challenges. The lack of a single source of information on labour market trends, skills demands, employment and training have created time and accessibility obstacles. To overcome this barrier, the Government, in partnership with the Community Development Councils (CDCs), will build a network of one-stop career centres to provide workers with employment-related information.

Strategy 3: Augmenting our talent pool

The key recommendations are:

(i) Singapore outreach

There are plans to expand and intensify the operations and infrastructure of Contact Singapore, an information and resource centre on education and employment opportunities in Singapore, to better reach out to international talent. Currently, Contact Singapore has centres in Boston, San Francisco, Toronto, Washington DC, London, Perth and Sydney.

(ii) Review foreign worker policy guidelines

MOM will also review Singapore's foreign worker policy guidelines to re-allocate foreign workers from low to high value-added sectors. The re-allocation of the foreign workers will result in productivity gains without taxing the fabric of the society, and contribute to raising the skills profile of Singapore's workforce.

Strategy 4: Transforming the work environment

The key recommendations are:

(i) Professionalising domestic-based industries

MOM and its partners also have plans to improve the professionalism and image of domestic-based industries such as cleaning, marine and hotel so that more Singaporeans will take on jobs in these sectors.

(ii) World-class HR practices

Although Singapore's workforce has been consistently ranked first by BERI, improvements can be made in the area of workers' attitude and technical skills. Good HR practices, including comprehensive staff development plans, will help to upgrade the quality of workers and increase motivation. Good HR practices are also integral to attracting and retaining talents, both local and foreign. In this regard, it is envisaged that a national recognition award will be created to recognise employers with exemplary HR development and management practices.

Strategy 5: Developing a vibrant manpower industry

The key recommendations are:

(i) World-class R&D institutions to set up in Singapore

Singapore needs a dynamic and responsive manpower industry that can support the development and management of a world-class workforce. To achieve this ambition, the manpower industry must leverage current global trends. These include harnessing the power of technology and the growing demand for skills in the services sector.

In line with the above trends, MOM will work with the Economic Development Board to encourage world-class institutions that carry out

R&D in workforce training/ organisational development and high value-added global manpower companies to set up operations in Singapore.

Strategy 6: Redefining partnerships

The key recommendation is:

(i) Harnessing collective energies

One of the challenges facing the labour movement is the impact of the changing educational profile of workers in the unions. With new workforce entrants being better educated, the union membership base has been shrinking. To address this issue, MOM, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), will organise an annual National Manpower Summit to tap the collective wisdom of the tripartite partners in reviewing and charting Singapore's manpower strategies. A Labour Management Partnership Programme to support joint labour-management initiatives will also be introduced.

Vision of a Talent Capital

The vision of Singapore as a Talent Capital encapsulates the essence of the country's manpower transformation efforts. As Singaporean workers and international talent converge to work, learn, contribute and exchange, we will be able to tap the well of knowledge to add value to Singapore, and transit it into a strong knowledge economy of the new millennium.

Part Three

Appendices

Appendix 1: Program of the 1999 National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Policy

The Seminar was held at the Kurrajong Hotel, Barton ACT, on Monday 6 September 1999.

Time	Session	Speakers
9.30–9.45am	Coffee and registration	
9.45–9.55am	Opening and welcome	
9.55–10.05am	1: Lifelong learning in Australia: Critical, desirable or just a good idea?	Philip Candy and Moira Scollay
10.05–11.00am	Small groups	
11.00–11.15am	Morning tea	
11.15–11.35am	2: Using research and practice for policy	Mary Dickie and June Beck
11.35am–12.20pm	Small groups	
12.20–12.45pm	Whole group feedback	
12.45–2.00pm	Lunch	
2.00–2.20pm	3: A framework to link learning: institutions, work and community	Peter Kearns
2.20–3.10pm	Small groups	
3.10–3.25pm	Afternoon tea	
3.25–4.00pm	Plenary: What are the next steps in developing a national lifelong learning policy?	
4.00pm	Drinks	

Appendix 2: Participants in the 1999 National Seminar on Lifelong Learning Policy

Seminar participants

Veronica Arbon	Director	Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
Deirdre Baker	Manager Access & Equity	Qld Dept of Training & Industrial Relations
Anne Baly	Director VET Policy & Review	Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs
Robin Ballantyne	Organiser	Australian Education Union, ACT
June Beck	Board/Director	Tourism Training Australia
Sally Borthwick	Assistant Director International Analysis & Evaluation Division	Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs
Tony Brown	Director	Adult Learning Australia
Philip Candy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	University of Ballarat
Angela Carbone	Professor School of Information & Management Systems	Monash University
Graham Crapp	Mayor	City of Wodonga
Alastair Crombie	Consultant	Alastair Crombie & Associates
Marie Dayton	Councillor	Australian Institute of Training & Development
Mary Dickie	Managing Director	Quay Connection
Chris Eccles	General Manager	Australian National Training Authority
Robyn Essex	Senior Consultant Training, Learning & Development	Westpac
Abigail Gray	Policy Officer	National Office for the Information Economy
Hugh Guthrie	Senior Manager Dissemination, Marketing & Publishing	National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd
Roger Harris	Director Centre for Research in Education, Equity & Work	University of South Australia
Geoff Heriot	General Manager Education Services	Australian Broadcasting Commission
Tess Julian	Executive Officer	National Assessors & Workplace Trainers Body
Peter Kearns	Managing Director	Global Learning Services

Seminar participants

Joy de Leo	Principal Policy Officer	SA Department of Education, Training & Employment
Dorothy Lucardie	President	Adult Learning Australia
Vilma McClenan	Chair Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education	University of the West Indies Jamaica
Helen Maddocks	Principal Consultant	WA Department of Training & Employment
Kerry Manikis	Research Officer	Canberra Institute of Technology (representing Manufacturing Learning Australia)
Shalini Mathur	Manager Knowledge Based Economy Branch	Department of Industry, Science & Resources
Terry Murphy	Director International Analysis & Evaluation Division	Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs
Beverley Pope	Research Scholar Lifelong Learning Network	University of Canberra
Denis Ralph	Director	South Australian Centre for Lifelong Learning & Development
Moira Scollay	Chief Executive Officer	Australian National Training Authority
Charu Sood	Deputy Executive Director	Australian Library Information Association
Martin Stewart-Weekes	Consultant	The Albany Consulting Group P/L
Anthony Stiff	Chief Executive Officer	Business Services Training ITAB
Sally Tansley	Senior Project Manager	CREATE Australia
Louise Watson	Research Scholar Lifelong Learning Network	University of Canberra
Lorraine Wheeler	Chief Executive Officer	Community Services & Health Training Australia ITAB
Jean Wilkinson	National Convenor	Older Women's Network Australia (representing Coaliation'99)
Peter Willis	Senior Lecturer Centre for Research in Education, Equity & Work	c/- School of Education University of South Australia

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